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City-business partnership taking survey

The city of Holyoke, in partnership with the Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce and EforAll Holyoke, is working on ways to help businesses stay open, reopen and adapt to the economic hardships wrought by the coronavirus pandemic.

The partnership is holding virtual meetings daily and is researching, seeking out resources, and helping to develop coordinated responses to best address the major needs of our local business owners.

To assist in this effort, officials are conducting a survey specifically for Holyoke businesses. This survey is meant to better understand where gaps

SURVEY, 7



Christina Royal

College leader pledges \$10K for 'Together HCC'

Holyoke Community College President Christina Royal has issued a personal \$10,000 challenge gift toward a new HCC campaign that is as much about building moral support in a time of great uncertainty as it is about raising money for students experiencing financial distress.

HCC, 5

Let's see your stories, photos of staying at home

The Holyoke Sun wants to know how you're coping with the coronavirus closures and how they've changed all of our lives — no school, no work, social distancing and staying at home.

We can't meet our neighbors in the schoolyards, playing fields or workplaces of Holyoke,

SHARE, 4

Virus sweeps through Soldiers' Home

State investigating, supt. on leave as 15 residents die, more are infected

By Peter Spotts
pspotts@turley.com

The Covid-19 pandemic hit home hard last weekend as more than a dozen veterans died in the Holyoke Soldiers' Home, with the coronavirus ripping through the building on Cherry Street.

As of April 1, the state was investigating 15 deaths at the state-operated assisted living facility, with six of those having tested positive for Covid-19, six additional tests pending, and one unknown. An additional 11 residents and seven staff members had also tested positive for the virus. All residents have been tested, with results expected after The Sun went to press.

A somber Mayor Alex Morse addressed the city on Facebook Live on Tuesday to provide residents with the details of what happened.

"At the onset, this is an important reminder of how deadly coronavirus can be if we don't follow proper procedures and protocol," Morse said. "These are people that gave their all, risked their lives to protect all of us and the



American flags form an impromptu memorial to victims of Covid-19 at the Cherry Street entrance to the Holyoke Soldiers' Home this week.

Photo by Michael Ballway

deserve better, frankly."

He added later in his statement, "I just can't imagine the pain and grief that many of these families are feeling. It's already tough to lose a love one, but without being able to visit, to grieve or mourn in a traditional setting ... just adds a different level of pain to people impacted and we want to do our part to stand with you and support you in any way we can."

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services said in a statement all residents

have been isolated and employees have been advised to quarantine until they are asymptomatic. Families of residents who have a positive Covid-19 test have been notified. While Morse found about the situation after deaths had already occurred, he's hopeful that the swift action taken by the state in the wake of the news will help contain the situation.

"I do think the actions taken over the last couple of days will save lives in the coming days and coming weeks, but I think we have to expect

the situation will get worse before it gets better," Morse said. "I'm glad that the state is now taking swift action to protect the most vulnerable among us."

One of those actions was to place former Superintendent Bennett Walsh on paid administrative leave and put Val Liptak, CEO of Western Massachusetts Hospital in Westfield, in charge of the Soldiers' Home. An investigation is being conducted to

See SOLDIERS, page 11

Hospitals on front lines of coronavirus fight

By Dalton Zbierski
and Melina Bourdeau
thesun@turley.com

While patients fight a war against Covid-19, medical personnel roam the front lines.

Medical professionals at Baystate hospitals in the region, Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Northampton and Holyoke Medical Center each face a similar set of issues caused by the pandemic,

which are being navigated on a daily basis.

As of March 25, throughout Baystate Health, 835 individuals have been tested; 373 have come back negative; 52 positive and 410 are still pending results.

Cooley Dickinson had issued 14 positive tests for Covid-19 and was in the process of investigating 92 additional people, as of the same date.



At the Holyoke Medical Center, one patient was being treated for Covid-19 as of March 23, but no nurses were on self-quarantine at that time.

Photo by Dalton Zbierski

At Holyoke Medical Center, one patient was being treated for Covid-19 as of March 23, but no nurses were on self-quarantine at that time.

Baystate Medical Center in Springfield has constructed a temporary rapid-response triage facility outside the Emergency Department as a result of the demands created by the coronavirus pandemic, according to Michelle Holmgren, of Baystate Health. "These are designed to handle some 30 to 40 patients; the triage area will serve as a rapid, initial screening venue for staff to identify those patients of most immediate need."

Neither Holyoke or Cooley Dickinson have transformed their waiting rooms into triage units and both are strictly sticking to protocols handed down by the federal Centers for Disease Control.

In order to meet the growing number of cases at each hospital, various safety measures have been implemented.

Inside Cooley Dickinson hospital, visitors have been

See HOSPITALS page 16

Churches staying connected online

By Shelby Macri
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Church buildings may be closed due to the coronavirus, but Holyoke's pastors are finding ways to keep the city's faith communities together.

With two of the biggest services of the year coming up over the next two weekends — Palm Sunday and Easter — members of the city's Christian congregations have had to adjust to worshiping online, using some of the same technology that students and telecommuters are using to get their work done during the week.

Pastor Phil Gustafson of St. Peter's Lutheran Church said he's been hosting virtual worship online, uploading videos to YouTube.com and broadcasting services live with the teleconferencing site Zoom.

"I leave the Zoom room open for a time after the video is over so that people can have a chance to talk and connect

See CHURCHES, page 11

Gov. extends stay-home advisory, business closures to May 4

BOSTON — On March 31, Gov. Charlie Baker announced several updates related to the Covid-19 outbreak, including extending the non-essential business emergency order and guidance for state executive branch employees until May 4.

The Department of Public Health’s stay-at-home advisory remains in effect. Baker also updated the state’s essential services list to add sectors of industry and commerce that provide essential services and can keep their brick-and-mortar facilities open during the emergency.

Essential Services: Baker’s emergency order requiring that all businesses and organizations that do not provide essential services close their physical workplaces and facilities to workers, customers and the public will be extended until May 4. Businesses and organizations not on the list of essential services are encouraged to continue operations through remote means that do not require workers, customers, or the public to enter or appear at the brick-and-mortar premises closed by the order. This order also prohibits gatherings of more

than 10 people until May 4.

A new version of the essential services list was released, adding:

- Supply chain businesses that support essential services
- Certain health care specialists such as chiropractors and optometrists
- Additional types of workers that provide disinfectant and sanitation services

While these businesses are designated as essential, they are urged to follow social distancing protocols for workers in accordance with guidance from the Department of Public Health.

Hotels and Motels: DPH also issued new guidance around hotels, motels, inns, bed-and-breakfasts and other short-term residential rentals. Under the new guidance, these forms of lodging should only be used for efforts related to fighting Covid-19, such as housing front-line health workers, or individuals who have been displaced from their residences.

Stay at Home Advisory: Last week, Baker directed DPH to issue a stay-at-home advisory, and the gover-

nor announced Tuesday that the advisory will remain in effect. Residents are advised to stay home and avoid unnecessary travel and other unnecessary person to person contact during this time period. Residents who are considered at high risk when exposed to Covid-19 should limit social interactions with other people as much as possible.

Executive Branch Employees: All state employees performing non-core functions who are able to work remotely should continue to do so until May 4. Full guidance will be sent to state executive branch employees directly. Some executive branch services and walk-in offices remain open, but residents are encouraged to use online services when available.

Field Medical Station: Massachusetts, through MEMA, has requested and received approval for a field medical station that will provide additional medical care capacity as the state plans for a surge in cases. The federal Strategic National Stockpile has approved a 250-bed field medical station that will be deployed to the DCU

Center in Worcester this week. This temporary facility will be managed by UMass-Memorial Medical Center and staffed by a partnership including the city of Worcester and others. The temporary field medical center will be used to treat lower-acuity patients who still need monitoring.

Nursing and Rest Homes: The state is implementing a pilot project that allows for safe, on-site testing of symptomatic residents of nursing and rest homes, with a quick turnaround. The pilot will operate under the auspices of the Massachusetts National Guard in partnership with the Department of Public Health and Broad Institute of Cambridge, and samples will be collected by trained personnel from the Massachusetts National Guard. Prior to this launch, the only way for nursing home residents to be tested would be to be transported to a hospital or physician’s office.

Members of the public should continue checking www.mass.gov/covid19 for the latest information on impacts from the Covid-19 outbreak.

Several city nonprofits benefit from coronavirus relief fund

SPRINGFIELD — The Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts this week announced the release of its first grants, totaling \$700,000, to community organizations and nonprofits, from its recently-established Covid-19 Response Fund for the Pioneer Valley.

The fund has raised \$2,480,000 from local philanthropic and business organizations and over 50 individuals. The first round of funding to support local response to the crisis includes:

- \$190,000 to distribute food through the region’s system of food pantries
- \$120,000 to address the needs of vulnerable elders, including home-delivered meals
- \$120,000 to provide critical health services and outreach through the Pioneer Valley’s federally designated community health centers
- \$150,000 to provide shelter for those without homes and those impacted by domestic violence
- \$120,000 to provide flexible supports to the region’s lowest income families and individuals

Organizations receiving funding include Caring Health Center, Catholic Charities Agency — Diocese of Springfield, Center for Human Development, Community Action Pioneer Valley, Community Health Center of Franklin County, Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, Friends of the Homeless clinical and support options, Greater Springfield Senior Services, Highland Valley Elder Services, Hilltown Community Health Center, Holyoke Health Center, LifePath, New England Learning Center for Women in Transition, Safe Passage, ServiceNet, Springfield Partners for Community Action, Springfield Rescue Mission, Valley Opportunity Council, WestMass ElderCare, Womanshelter Companeras, and YWCA of Western Massachusetts.

According to Katie Allan Zobel, president and CEO of the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, more grants are expected to be announced and released next week to respond to emerging needs.

“These initial grants will support urgent and immediate needs of those most vulnerable and adversely affected by this unprecedented crisis and those who have been most impacted

by inequity,” Zobel said. “Through the generosity of our community and the establishment of this response fund, we are helping those in need living in the 69 cities and towns that make up Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire counties.”

Zobel said next week’s round of grants will likely include health services to organizations serving those with particular health vulnerabilities due to factors such as mental illness, compromised immune systems or addiction.

Given the long-term impact of the crisis and the evolving community needs, the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts and its partners will continue to raise funds and make grants over the next several months.

“We are encouraging our business community and individuals to consider contributing to the fund as the urgent needs for support continues to grow,” Zobel said.

Entities contributing to the fund thus far include bankESB; Berkshire Bank; Beveridge Family Foundation; Big Y; Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts; Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts; the Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation, Dietz & Co. Architects; Greenfield Cooperative Bank and Northampton Cooperative Bank; Keady, Foard, Montemagni, UBS Wealth Management; MassMutual; PeoplesBank; TD Charitable Foundation; and Westfield Bank.

In subsequent phases, grants will be made to address needs of nonprofit organizations that have been financially impacted by the crisis.

The Community Foundation welcomes additional donations to the Covid-19 Response Fund for the Pioneer Valley. Gifts can be made at communityfoundation.org/coronavirus-donations.

“The Covid-19 Response Fund for the Pioneer Valley is designed to pool community giving and apply the Community Foundation’s expertise and experience to make grants that help our community effectively respond to the crisis,” said Zobel. “During this time, we also encourage our community members to give directly to those nonprofits you know and trust that are being impacted now or that are responding to the Covid-19 crisis.”

All encouraged to respond to census

On April 1, Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth William Galvin commemorated Census Day, a day that occurs every 10 years, when every person living in the country must be counted.

While the day would normally be marked by public events to spread the word and encourage residents to return their census forms, with the state currently under an advisory to stay home, Galvin encouraged cities and towns to reach out to their residents in new and creative ways.

“This crisis reinforces the significance of making sure Massachusetts gets its fair share of federal resources for things like public health programs and hospitals,” Galvin said. “The census count is used to decide how much support we will receive from the federal government for the next 10 years.”

Galvin, who serves as the state’s 2020 census liaison, has reached out to communities around Massachusetts to ask them to reach out to their residents in any safe or remote way they can, in order to raise awareness of Census Day. Upon his recommendation, many cities and towns made “reverse 9-1-1” calls to households, asking residents to go www.my2020census.gov to be counted.

“Every person who responds to their census now is helping to reduce the need for a census worker to go door-to-door later,” Galvin said.

Residents also have the option of responding to the census by phone by calling 844-330-2020. Phone numbers for those who require other languages may be found on the Census Bureau’s website, at 2020census.gov/en/ways-to-respond/responding-by-phone.html.

UMass gives masks to Soldiers’ Home

The University of Massachusetts Amherst recently donated personal protective equipment to hospitals and first responders in the region as part of the ongoing statewide and national response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Masks, gloves, gowns and sanitary clothing from campus laboratories were distributed to the Soldiers’ Home in Holyoke, Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, UMass-Memorial Medical Center in Worcester, Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Northampton and the Amherst Fire Department.

University officials said the donations will not affect their ability to conduct operations on the Amherst campus, including University Health Services and

protection of essential employees working on campus.

Jeff Hescock, executive director of environmental health and safety and emergency management at UMass-Amherst, said all of the materials were collected from university researchers and faculty.

“Because we have switched to remote learning, the researchers on campus are doing less in-person activity and that has made this donation of materials possible,” he said. “I want to thank our research community and faculty for their assistance.”

The Soldiers Home in Holyoke picked up surgical masks and gloves on Wednesday, March 25.

HCC scholarship deadline is extended

Holyoke Community College has extended the deadline to apply for scholarships for the 2020-21 academic year. The new application deadline is Wednesday, April 8.

Students must be currently enrolled at HCC or have been accepted for the upcoming academic year to be eligible for scholarships, which are awarded through the HCC Foundation, HCC’s nonprofit fundraising corporation.

More than \$200,000 in awards is available for incoming, continuing and transferring HCC students.

Applicants need only fill out a single form at www.hcc.edu/scholarships to be automatically matched with the scholarships they are most qualified to receive. There are scholarships for new students, current students and students transferring to other institutions, scholarships based on financial need, scholarships for students in specific majors, scholarships for residents of certain communities, and scholarships that recognize academic achievement.

Questions should be directed to the HCC Foundation office at 413-552-2182.

Trials proceeding by teleconference at local courts

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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By now, all Holyoke residents should be familiar with how their “essential” government services are operating. Police, firefighters, ambulance and trash collection are operating as normal. Schools and the Senior Center are closed.

If government buildings are closed, but law enforcement operations continue, where does that leave the court system?

Springfield’s Roderick J. Ireland Courthouse was closed on March 16 and 17 to allow for deep cleaning. On Friday, March 20, it was announced a court officer in the Superior Court, which hears major cases originating in Holyoke and other Hampden County cities, had tested positive for coronavirus, and the court was closed for a week. It reopened on Monday, March 30.

But “re-opened” is a loose term, and the Hampden County district attorney is operating with limited staff in person at the courthouse. The same is true at courthouses around Massachusetts, including Holyoke District Court, which handles minor cases from Holyoke. Judges in all area courts are on a rotation, as well, to

limit their exposure to the public.

The courts are closed through at least April 6, and that closure could extend further with President Donald Trump’s recent order that social distancing continue through April 30.

According to a message from the Supreme Judicial Court, court appearances are limited to “emergency matters.”

“Courts will be closed to the public March 18, 2020, until at least April 6, 2020. The only matters that will be heard in person in Massachusetts state courthouses are emergency matters that cannot be held by videoconference or telephone. Each of the seven Trial Court departments will define emergency matters for their departments,” the SJC ordered on March 18.

“Courthouses will be closed to the public except to conduct emergency hearings that cannot be resolved through a videoconference or telephonic hearing,” the order continues. “Clerks’ offices shall remain open to the public to accept pleadings and other documents in emergency matters only.”

Some judges have held hearings for issues such as restraining orders. However, any non-emergency issues have

been deferred or “continued” by the court — delayed for hearings at a later date.

Also being continued are all jury trials.

“All trials in both criminal and civil cases scheduled to commence in Massachusetts state courts between today and April 17, 2020, are continued to a date no earlier than April 21, 2020,” ordered the SJC, “unless the trial is a civil case where the parties and the court agree that the case can be decided without the need for in-person appearance in court. Where a jury trial has commenced, the trial will end based on the manifest necessity arising from the pandemic and a new trial may commence after the public health emergency ends.”

The administration of justice continues, however. Judges are turning to some of the same technologies that teachers and office workers are using during the coronavirus pandemic — telephone teleconferencing, videoconferencing, email and other means. They are holding arraignments remotely, for example.

For jurors, with jury service suspended, the Office of the Jury Commissioner is temporarily closed. The people in the office are working remotely. All jurors

who were assigned service dates through April 7 have had their service canceled. Those with service scheduled after that date are on standby status, unless they have received a notice of cancellation from the court.

For more information, jurors, plaintiffs, defendants and other parties to court proceedings should call the clerk’s office in their court or visit www.mass.gov. The following courts serve cases originating in Holyoke:

Hampden County Superior Court: Clerk, 413-735-6016 or Hampden.clerk-soffice@jud.state.ma.us; probation, 413-748-7653.

Hampden Probate and Family Court: Register, 413-748-7760; probation, 413-748-7797.

Holyoke District Court: Clerk, 413-538-9710 or cmholyokedc@jud.state.ma.us; probation, 413-598-9712.

Holyoke Juvenile Court: Clerk and probation, 413-322-6700.

Western Housing Court: Clerk, 413-748-7838 or WesternHousingCourt@jud.state.ma.us.

For juror information at any Massachusetts state court, call 800-THE-JURY (800-843-5879).

Blood donor center reopens in Holyoke

As President Donald Trump left the White House briefing room recently during a coronavirus update, someone shouted out, “donate blood!”

It was an important message. The need is so great that Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker included blood and platelet donors on his list of essential services issued recently.

America faces a severe blood shortage during the coronavirus pandemic and the U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams is urging healthy individuals to donate blood as the crisis unfolds.

Until further notice during the coronavirus pandemic, Baystate Health is relocating all blood and platelet donation to 361 Whitney Ave., Holyoke.

Blood donations will take place daily, Monday through Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Walk-ins are welcome, but

appointments are suggested and can be made by calling 413-794-4600.

Platelet donations will also occur at Whitney Avenue, but are by appointment only at 413-794-4600.

Additional protocols are being implemented during the coronavirus pandemic for the safety and health of donors, including:

- Prescreening donors
- Extra precautionary cleaning
- Spacing out donors to comply with social distancing and group gathering restrictions.

All eligible donors will receive a ticket to Six Flags (for future use, valid through Jan. 3, 2021) and a gift card to Big Y or Dunkin’.

For more information or to make an appointment, contact the Baystate Health Blood Donor Center at 413-794-4600.

Press Club Roast postponed until fall

SPRINGFIELD — The Valley Press Club’s Board of Directors decided March 17 to postpone the May 8 Valley Press Club Roast to the fall due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The roast, which features humorous sketches about public officials as a fundraiser for the club’s scholarships to journalism students, is usually held in the spring at the John Boyle O’Reilly Club in Springfield.

Tony Cignoli, noted national political consultant, was to be the emcee. Numerous local politicians, including

area mayors, city councilors and state legislators, were expected to attend.

The roast is similar to the White House Correspondents’ dinner in Washington, D.C., which uses humor to bring both the media and newsmakers together. Peter Goonan, reporter of The Republican, is the chairman of the event. The Valley Press Club, founded in 1960, consists of active and retired journalists, and marketing and public relations professionals.

For more information or to become a member, visit valleypressclub.com.



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Office of the Manager
Holyoke Gas & Electric Department
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Deadline: May 15, 2020

(Applications will only be considered if received on or before the deadline).

Application forms may be obtained during regular business hours at the above address or from school guidance counselors. For further information, please contact the Office of the Manager, at 536-9313.

Applicants for the scholarship must be:

- 1) Residents of the City of Holyoke.
- 2) Graduates of a duly accredited senior secondary school (year 2020 or before).
- 3) Not less than seventeen (17) years old on their last birthday, nor more than twenty-five (25) years old.
- 4) Accepted for admission to, or already enrolled in, an accredited community college, college, or university having a course of study leading to a degree of Bachelor of Science in Engineering.



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Sheriff, DA oppose call to release more inmates

By Elise Linscott
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Several groups are calling for the release of inmates across the state in order to slow the spread of the coronavirus, but Hampden County Sheriff Nick Cocchi and District Attorney Anthony Gulluni said Monday these broad-brush recommendations are “strongly ill-advised” and “careless.”

The ACLU Foundation of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and the Boston-based Committee for Public Counsel Services have been pushing for the release of inmates statewide due to the coronavirus pandemic and the susceptibility of inmates in close quarters.

“Correctional facilities, where physical distancing and vigilant hygiene are impossible, can be petri dishes for the rapid spread of infectious disease,” the three groups said in a Supreme Judicial Court petition filed March 24. “Outbreaks in our prisons will, of course, imperil the lives of incarcerated people, but they will also endanger correctional officers and medical staff, their families, and their communities as staff cycle through the facilities.”

They asked that the state courts account for the threat of Covid-19 in jails when determining whether to detain a suspect before trial; to release inmates currently being held prior to disposition of their cases if they have not been determined to be a danger to public safety; and to release inmates in groups considered particularly vulnerable to Covid-19 who are near the end of their sentences, or do not pose a threat to the public.

In a press conference Monday, Gulluni said that because society is in a precarious condition, releasing scores of Hampden County inmates — potentially hundreds of thousands of inmates and prisoners across the state — into society is “a bad idea.”

Gulluni also said these requests are a “broad-brush approach, and a dangerous approach.”

“It does not consider victims’ statutory rights, it does not consider public safety,” Gulluni said. For instance, statu-

torily guaranteed victims wouldn’t have notice of inmates being released.

In the past week, Gulluni said his office agreed to a handful of inmates being released who “do not pose a risk to victims and do not pose a significant risk to public safety, and are at greater risk because of a pre-existing health condition and or because of their age.”

“We’ve taken a case-by-case basis, not insensitive to the risk that is posed to inmates, but thoughtful,” he said.

In the last month, 107 inmates have been released. A month ago, there were 1,166 men and women in custody between the Hampden County Correctional Center in Ludlow and the Western Massachusetts Regional Women’s Correctional Center. As of Monday, there were 1,059, Cocchi said.

As of Monday, there were no cases of Covid-19 in any Hampden County correctional facilities. Cocchi said he doesn’t believe he can keep the disease out of the jails forever, as the threat of someone new entering with the virus is “always present.”

“Jails are a direct reflection of our communities,” he said. “However, we have a strong prevention plan that is working ... and we have protocols in place to handle the situation without having it spread amongst our population.”

Individuals leaving now would also be released without a proper release plan and that could be problematic for those struggling with substance abuse and recovery. For example, an individual’s risk of overdose if released without insurance coverage for medication assisted treatment exceeds the risk of acquiring Covid-19 within the Hampden County correctional facilities, according to a joint press release from the sheriff and DA.

Most halfway houses are not accepting any new clients until this pandemic is under control, Cocchi said. Many of the inmates are self-reported as homeless and they need staffs’ assistance to find them an appropriate and safe living situation, “or we are just shifting the responsibility of care to our towns and cities,” according to the press release.

SHARE, from page 1

but we can all share a few snapshots of what life’s like with the kids in the house and the home office working overtime. Take a minute to send in an update on how you’re doing, what fun enrichment activities the kids have been up to, or anything else that’s made the past two weeks a special time in your home. Include full names of the writer or photographer, and anyone visible in each photo. We’ll print the best entries in next week’s newspaper, and in subsequent

weeks as the state of emergency continues. The best way to contact us is at thesun@turley.com.

We would also be glad to publish Holyoke children’s artwork, essays or photos created during the school closure. Include the creator’s full name, age, and school attended.

For all submissions, also include a telephone number and email address. We won’t publish this information, but may use it to verify identities or ask follow-up questions.

Stay safe out there — and let us know how you’re doing!

City repurposes federal grants for social services, housing help

To meet the increased community needs during the coronavirus state of emergency, Mayor Alex Morse and the Holyoke Office for Community Development are working with Holyoke’s public service agencies to redeploy Community Development Block Grant funds in ways that will provide immediate relief to residents.

Womenshelter Compañeras, Providence Ministries and WestMass Eldercare, all of whom attend to the basic needs of food access and shelter, will each receive a 15 percent increase to their exist-

ing CDBG contracts, the maximum allowable increase under federal government rules.

Upon learning of the granted increase, Sarah Aasheim, director of community programs for WestMass Eldercare, responded, “WMEC so appreciates this extra CDBG funding — it is so needed at this time to support our Meals on Wheels service expansion in response to the Covid-19 outbreak.”

“In times of need, Holyokers have always worked together to find solutions for the greater good,” said Morse. “I am

proud that our public service agencies are coordinating together to protect the overall health of the community.”

In addition to the increased funds for life-sustaining services, Morse has announced a Covid-19 Loan Modification Policy for landlords who are currently participating in the Rental Neighborhood Improvement Program, which offers low-interest loans to rental property owners to provide safe, sanitary, decent housing for low- and moderate-income households. This voluntary six-month loan payment forbearance will impact

approximately 25 rental properties. The new policy will reduce operating expenses for property owners, allowing them to continue to meet the housing and service needs of their tenants even with anticipated income decreases. RNIP is also funded with CDBG funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

For additional information, contact the city of Holyoke Office for Community Development at 413-322-5610 or zoeller@holyoke.org, or the RNIP administrator, OneHolyoke CDC, at 413-533-7101.

HOME WORKS



Darlene A. Smith Benson, a proud 1968 alumna of Holyoke High School, shared her drawing of “Hope for the World during this very troubled time.”

Submitted artwork



Irizar Marie Maldonado, a seventh grader from Sullivan School, exercised her creativity with a public health warning. The Holyoke Sun wants to share your artwork from the past few weeks — and the coming few weeks — of staying at home. Two readers sent in their creations this week. To participate, send the work in JPEG format to thesun@turley.com. Please include the artist's full name, grade level and school attended. We also welcome essays and photographs created during the school closure, and updates from families about how they've been coping with the changes in their daily routine — especially tips on how to keep busy, engaged and positive.

Holyoke Community College student wins honor for poetry

As a student at Smith College in 1955, a young Sylvia Plath won the prestigious Glascock Poetry Prize, launching her career as an esteemed poet and author of works such as her collection “Ariel” and autobiographical novel “The Bell Jar.”

James Agee, Kenneth Koch, James Merrill, Katha Pollit, Muriel Rukeyser, Mark Halperin, and Mary Jo Salter are among the other famous writers who were also Glascock entrants. Judges in the annual, intercollegiate contest administered by Mount Holyoke College have over the years included the legendary poets Robert Frost, Seamus Heaney, Adrienne Rich, Richard Wilbur, William Carlos Williams, and Martin Espada, among others.

On Monday, the 2020 Glascock Poetry Prize was awarded to Marissa Perez of Florence, a student at Holyoke Community College.

“This is a huge deal,” said HCC English professor Carolyn Zaikowski, who nominated Perez. “The contest is considered a career starter, and it has never been won by a community college student before. I hope the academic writing community will get the clear message here — that community college students are amazing and talented, and deserve to be taken seriously.”

The annual poetry contest honors the memory of Kathryn Irene Glascock, a promising young poet who graduated from Mount Holyoke in 1922 and died of pneumonia a year later.

Andrea Lawlor, assistant professor



Holyoke Community College student Marissa Perez was recently awarded the Glascock Poetry Prize, whose past recipients include Sylvia Plath.

Submitted photo

of English at Mount Holyoke College, said Perez is the first community college student ever to compete in the Glascock Poetry Contest. The winner receives trophy and a cash award.

Perez, a 24-year-old liberal arts major, is the 97th winner of the contest, believed to be the oldest intercollegiate poetry contest in the United States. Students must be nominated by a faculty member at their college. A collection of their work is judged by a panel of three distinguished poets. This year’s judges were Kaveh Akbar, Franny Choi and Erica Hunt.

“When it dawned on me what was happening, and what this would mean, I was euphoric,” Perez said. “Generally, I’ve been detached from the poetry world, as I’ve never been involved in any inner

literary circles and don’t often share my work. The experience of participating was at once cathartic and terrifying. Kaveh Akbar, one of this year’s judges, is one of my most beloved contemporary poets.”

Perez submitted eight poems for their consideration.

“The selection team was comprised of exquisite writers whose company I initially felt I wasn’t worthy of,” she said. “I felt I was giving a piece of my soul to these judges when I handed over the manuscript. It was raw, messy, and cathartic material. In the grand scheme of things, I realize I put my trust in them to take care of my work and give it life. I’m so honored and grateful to have been able to do such a thing.”

In their comments, the judges wrote

that they especially admired a poem called “Pacific Coast Highway,” “for its pacing, emotion and its poetics of the winding line mirroring the winding road of California Route 1 itself.”

“I am sincerely fascinated by this poet’s often staggering treatment of language as the subject of their interrogation, language itself as the antidote to its own venom,” one judge said. “I’m excited to watch this poet continue to grow!”

Zaikowski said she knew Perez was an exceptional writer from the first time she shared her work in their Creative Writing course.

“The rest of the class knew it, too,” Zaikowski said. “In all of the genres we worked in, she had a bone-level radar for a particular mix of the personal and the political, and a way of using subtle, surprising images, moods, and lyricism to convey it.”

At one point, Zaikowski said, she sat down with Perez and asked her what kind of writer she wanted to be.

“There are a couple types of writers,” Zaikowski said: “Writers who write as a hobby, and writers who kind of feel like they would not know who they were or that they’d die inside if they couldn’t write. I asked her what category she was in. I knew the answer already, but she confirmed she was in the latter. And I felt like she wasn’t just writing for herself, she was using her writing skills to articulate, and try to heal, larger social issues. The world needs more voices like that.”

HCC, from page 1

On Monday, March 30, the HCC Foundation launched “Together HCC — A Campaign for Caring.” As part of that campaign, students, staff, faculty, alumni, relatives and friends of the college are being asked to use the hashtag #TogetherHCC to share stories and images on social media that show the strength of the college community in response to the Covid-19 crisis.

Royal’s \$10,000 commitment also includes a challenge to gather 1,000 contributions of any kind toward the #TogetherHCC campaign. That includes

monetary donations as well as social media posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, as well as email submissions that describe an inspirational tale or messages of encouragement relating to the pandemic.

“This is an unprecedented time in our history that can only be navigated if we work together,” said Royal. “Our campaign for caring enables members of our community to offer encouragement to one another and provide inspiration. The financial investments and kind words offered through this campaign are vitally important to our students’ success and to the well-being of every member of our community.”

Besides scholarships, the HCC Foundation manages several funds that directly support students facing financial emergencies, as well as those experiencing food and housing insecurity. These include the President’s Student Emergency Fund, which was established by Royal, and another that supports HCC’s Thrive Student Resource Center, which manages the HCC Food Pantry.

“This has been, and continues to be, a stressful and challenging time for everyone,” said Amanda Sbriscia, HCC’s vice president of institutional advancement and executive director of the HCC Foundation, the college’s nonprofit fundraising corporation. “The Covid-19 crisis has turned the

world upside down, and amidst this uncertainty, we still need to do everything we can to provide our students with the education and support they deserve. Meanwhile, our students are facing all kinds of challenges in their own lives. Together HCC isn’t just about providing financial support for them, it’s also about providing moral support. Through this campaign we want to let our students and other members of the college community know that it’s going to be OK, and that we are all in this together.”

For more information about the campaign or to contribute, visit hcc.edu/together or email Julie Phillips, coordinator of alumni relations, at jphillips@hcc.edu.

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Editorial

Be bear aware this spring

Though it's beginning to look like our shared community life will never emerge from its coronavirus hibernation, spring is definitely in the air — and the bears are waking up.

Soon, flowers will be in full bloom, temperatures will climb above 60 degrees, and the state will stock ponds and rivers with trout. Just as the rising temperatures and blossoming woods inspire folks to get outside, another group of mammals will also be walking around: the black bear.

Though downtown Holyoke is about as urban as Western Massachusetts gets, it's surrounded by wooded areas, including Mount Tom and reservoir properties within the city's boundaries. Holyoke was bear country before any human ever dug a canal or built a house. It isn't a question of whether bears will make their way into the city's residential neighborhoods — it's when.

While bears may be intimidating and strike fear in the minds of many people, bears and people often peacefully coexist with little to no contact. In some instances, they cause property damage to gardens and bird feeders as they search for a quick meal. In most, the bear comes away with a bad reputation or with a bounty on its head.

According to the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, there are at least 4,500 black bears statewide. Those bears are now active and in search of food. To avoid property damage or the possible killing of a bear, MassWildlife encourages folks to remove bird feeders, garbage and compost from outside their homes, and to properly secure chickens, beehives and any livestock.

Perhaps their most important piece of advice is to "keep bears wild," never feeding the animals intentionally or even unintentionally by leaving pet dishes or other food sources outdoors. Officials say most nuisance situations can be avoided by removing food or modifying human behavior.

Rather than using bird feeders, officials suggest planting native plants and adding water features, which may help to increase the attractiveness to birds while reducing the unnatural feeding of bears and other potential nuisance animals.

When composting, folks should avoid adding meat, oily and sweet-smelling or -tasting materials. Such products attract bears and other animals. Garbage, MassWildlife says, should be placed outside just prior to pickup and stored in closed containers in a garage or outbuilding.

Even when cubs are present, officials remind folks it is uncommon for a bear to attack. Mother bears often send their cubs up trees to avoid danger and won't let them

See BEAR, page 7



Letters to the Editor

Test scores show decline in achievement

In Efrain Martinez's letter to the editor dated March 27, 2020, he provided an alternative view to what we presented to the Holyoke City Council on March 9, 2020. At that time, we claimed, among other things, that the increase in graduation rates at Holyoke High School was due to a lowering of academic, attendance and behavioral standards, and not increased achievement.

Let us look at some of the current data which illustrates our concerns regarding achievement. This data can be found at profiles.doe.mass.edu.

2019 MCAS Data

- Grades 3-8, ELA, Math and Science: Holyoke scores range from the lowest to third-lowest in the state.
- Grade 10 ELA: Holyoke is fifth-lowest in the state. The scores declined by 3.8 CPI points from 2018; the state Composite Performance Index (CPI) stayed the same.
- Grade 10 math: Holyoke is second-lowest in the state. The scores declined by 5.6 CPI points from 2018; the state CPI increased by 0.3 points. Holyoke grade 10 MCAS math scores have not been this low since 2009.
- Grade 10 science: Holyoke is second-lowest in the state. The scores declined by 8.2 CPI points from 2018; the state CPI declined by 0.2 points. Holyoke grade 10 MCAS science scores have not been this low since 2012.
- In every grade level and subject where Holyoke is not the lowest, Southbridge, another district in receivership, is below Holyoke.

Grade 10 MCAS overview

- Grade 10 MCAS tests are subject tests

and the scores required to pass the exams have historically been very low. In 2019, the minimum passing scores were: ELA, 41 percent; math, 22 percent; and science, 33 percent. Given the fact that the test is grade level and the passing score is very low, passing the 10th grade MCAS only indicates that a student has a fundamental understanding of ninth and 10th grade standards.

Advanced Placement

- Since receivership, 779 students took 1,451 AP exams, and 1,050 exams were failed. This failing percentage of 72.4 percent is one of the highest in the state.

Accountability Percentile

- From the Massachusetts Schools Accountability system: the accountability percentile (between 1 and 99) is a school's overall performance relative to other schools in the state that serve similar grades. Holyoke High School's percentile was 11 in 2015 and 2 in 2019.
- In 2015, before receivership, six out of nine schools in Holyoke were in the lowest 10th percentile. In 2019, seven out of nine schools were in the lowest 10th percentile.

Mr. Martinez says our claim implies we do not believe our students are capable of "higher performance unless standards are lowered." This could not be further from the truth. By lowering the standards for our students, we are not providing them the educational opportunity they deserve and need to be successful members of society. By lowering standards, we are providing them and their parents with the fallacy that they received an adequate education, whereas

See SCORES, page 7

the Sun

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A Quote

OF NOTE

"Not being able to see my people has been crazy-making. ... I didn't realize how much of my job includes building relationships with people."

The Rev. Marisa Egerstrom



Letters to the Editor Policy

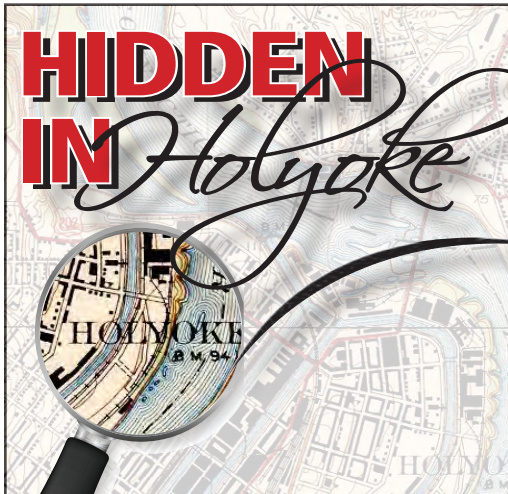
Letters to the Editor have a maximum of 350 words. We require writers to include their name, address and phone number in order for our office to authenticate authorship prior to publication. Addresses and phone numbers are not published.

Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions. Libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks or defamation of character are not allowed.

Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

Please email (preferred) letters to the-sun@turley.com. Mailed letters can be sent to The Sun, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.



Each week, *The Holyoke Sun* will feature a photo of a distinctive place, landmark, sculpture, sign or other recognizable object located somewhere in the city.

Think you know what or where it is? Readers are encouraged to submit their guesses to "Hidden in Holyoke" via email to TheSun@Turley.com. In order to qualify for the weekly contest, entries must be received by Wednesday at noon for inclusion into Friday's edition. Please include your full name with your guess in an email to TheSun@turley.com. If more than one correct answer is received, the names of all those who submitted guesses will be listed. For more information, contact *The Holyoke Sun* at 413-283-8398.



Last week's "Hidden in Holyoke" was Holyoke District Court as seen from the Korean War Veterans Plaza, opposite from the City Hall Annex. It was correctly guessed by Gail Bergeron, Don Diller, Dexter and Alice Gess, David Sacks, Fred Wanat, and Jay Whelihan.

Text service helps families keep learning

With the closures of schools and early education centers as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the 413families texting program and its partners are utilizing this platform to reach families with young children to provide texts with important information, free resources and activities, and gift card giveaways for families.

Recognizing that schools are closed and families are together at home, with many parents serving as teachers for their children, the program provides important, timely information with two to three text

messages per week, such as free meal sites in Springfield and Holyoke, as well as free educational activities that families can do together at home.

413families also engages with its opt-ins through interactive giveaway texts. For example, a recent text asked families to share a photo of how they are learning at home, for a chance to win a Big Y gift card.

The 413families community texting program, which launched in 2016, now has 3,700 local families opted in. In 2018, 413families expanded to Holyoke.

The campaign is a collaboration among seven community organizations: the Reading Success by 4th Grade initiative, convener of the program; Springfield City Library; Springfield Museums; Home City Families/Springfield Public Schools; WGBY Public Television; Baystate New Beginnings; and the Holyoke Early Literacy Initiative (HELI).

Throughout the year, 413families sends two to three messages per week that include reading and parenting tips as well as information about events and giveaways, including free tickets to com-

munity events, bookstore gift cards, and Pride Stores gift cards.

Those who opt in to the 413families texting program have the option to receive messages in English or Spanish. To receive messages in English, simply text the keyword 413families to 313131; and to receive messages in Spanish, text the keyword 413familias to 313131. To receive Holyoke-specific messages, text 413familiesH to 313131 (English) or 413familiasH to 313131 (Spanish). For more information or to join online, visit www.413families.com.

State taking signups for coronavirus emergency text alerts

Gov. Charlie Baker on Tuesday announced the launch of a new text-based notification system to deliver important information about Massachusetts’ response to the coronavirus pandemic.

“Throughout this outbreak, we have consistently reminded our residents to get their information from trusted sources. Today we’re making that easier,” said Baker. “With the addition of this new communication tool, we’re making it easier for everyone to stay informed about state actions and important announcements related to Covid-19.”

The new messaging tool called “AlertsMA” will allow residents to subscribe to real-time notifications by texting the keyword COVIDMA to 888-777. After signing up, state and public health officials can send short messages and links to information directly to a resident’s cell phone or other mobile device.

“Being well-informed during this public health emergency, and following health officials’ advice, can help us to slow and eventually stop the spread of Covid-19 in our communities,” said Marylou Sudders, the state’s Covid-19 Command Center director. “Staying connected with our residents is a central part of our response.”

The AlertsMA notifications can be used to share news, prevention information, and help connect residents to information that they are looking for through other public information channels, such as the state’s information line, 2-1-1, and website searches on mass.gov.

The state Executive Office of Technology Services and Security partnered with Everbridge, whose platform powers AlertsMA, to bring the notification service online during the Covid-19 response. Everbridge is a Massachusetts-based company located in Burlington.

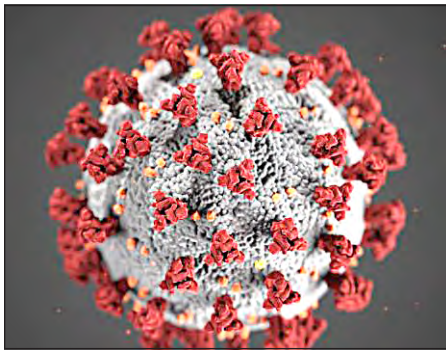
The company’s notification service is assisting the public health response around the country, including New York City, San Francisco, and Houston.

“During this public health emergency, it is increasingly important that we leverage technology to enhance our ability to communicate with the residents and businesses of the commonwealth,” said Technology Services and Security Secretary Curtis M. Wood. “This text message notification service is a tool that reaches people in the easiest way possible — on their mobile devices — to keep them informed on the latest updates from the commonwealth.”

“Statewide public notification systems like AlertsMA will keep people safe and businesses running when critical events occur,” said David Meredith, CEO of Everbridge. “With our headquarters here in Massachusetts, Everbridge proudly serves the commonwealth as their

statewide mass notification provider, keeping citizens informed during Covid-19. We would like to thank the governor and the state for their continued prioritization on emergency readiness, response and communications.”

The state will promote the service on mass.gov, through digital displays and billboards at the MBTA, via MassDOT, and through social media.



SURVEY, from page 1

may exist in resources currently available from the state, federal and local governments, as well as other agencies that provide services.

Businesses are asked to share how the Covid-19 crisis is affecting their

organization, whether it is positive or negative. The information will be used to inform the partnership’s efforts. Survey responses are due Monday, April 6.

A link to the survey, as well as other coronavirus- and business aid-related resources, can be found at covid19ghcc.wixsite.com/businessresources.

SCORES, from page 6

in reality, these lower standards merely serve to boost the illusory success of educational bureaucrats.

If it is true that the state is in the process of “developing an exit strategy,” now is the time for the teachers, parents and citizens of Holyoke to participate in the process. Let’s move our public schools in a direction which upholds standards and increases achievement while also accommodating the complex needs of our students.

This letter was signed by 77 former Holyoke school teachers and administrators: Dorothy Albrecht, Elicia Andrews, Doug Arnold, Michael Athas, Joy Bartley, Barbara Bernard, Diane Borowski, Animesh Bose, Margaret Brown, Elizabeth Butler, Angela Cartier, Joan Cavanaugh, Mary Cochran, Roger Cook, Gerry Corradino, Elizabeth DeJesus, Helen Donahoe, Chester

Dudley, Mary Ann Dunn, Kathy Dunn, Lynn Dutsar, Patricia Eagan, Judy Falcetti, Marc Feinberg, Tony Fernandes, Mark Folta, Allen Gagnon, Sheryl Gelinas, Gerry Girouard, Michael Gill, Diane Godek, Nicole Henry, Darlene Henshaw, Patti Jennings, Beth Kane, Doryn Kelly, Robert Lastowski, David Lawrence, Louise Lawrence, Lorenda Lewis-Carmen, Charlene Mahoney, Paula Marcotte, Joann Marcotte, Laurie Marvel, Olivia Mausel, Ellen McDonough, Lee McGarrigle, Michael McKenna, Kathy McMahon, Marie Mew, Gus Morales, Noreen Moriarty, Susan Napolitano, Kristin Newell, Gary O’Connor, Mary Anne O’Connor, Patricia O’Donnell, Eileen O’Neil, Judy Parker, Barbara Pasternak, Sonia Pope, Audrey Poulin, Sandy Rigali, Jill Reardon, Peter Rego, Linda Rex, Jim Ripa, James Rossmeisl, John Roth, Sally Stocking, Elizabeth Syrek-Lacey, Sharon Szostkiewicz, Susan Tawrell, Thomas Tisdell, Halina Wilkes, Nancy Zenisky, Tony Zebrowski.

BEAR, from page 6

down until the threat is gone. If an encounter with any bear occurs, people should calmly back away and avoid running, talking calmly.

In the rare circumstances when a black bear may show aggressive behavior, folks should stand their ground and fight back if necessary. Make noise, wave arms or branches and look bigger than the bear.

More information about living with bears may be found online at mass.gov/bears.

While bears may be intimidating, their presence is often a natural occurrence. By being proactive and being aware of our own behavior, we can keep it that way.

Tell us what you think — and what you see. Send letters to the editor or your bear and other wildlife sightings to thesun@turley.com.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Bond villain Mikkelsen

5. A team’s best pitcher

8. French river

12. Mountain nymph (Greek)

14. City of Angels airport

15. Military force

16. Scrawny

18. Value

19. One billionth of a second (abbr.)

20. Highly seasoned sausage

21. Trouble

22. Prong

23. Showing varying colors

26. Cloaked

30. Renters sign one

31. Acquires

32. Type of language (abbr.)

33. Partner to pains

34. Third portion of the

small intestine

39. Excessively theatrical actor

42. Infraction

44. Classical music for the stage

46. Slogged

47. One who terminates

49. Breakfast is an important one

50. Moved earth

51. Medical procedures

56. Genus of clams

57. Not well

58. Comparative figure of speech

59. Covered thinly with gold

60. Principle underlying the universe

61. A parent’s sisters

62. Professional engineering group

63. Coniferous tree

64. Impudence

CLUES DOWN

1. Female parents

2. Region

3. Transaction

4. Heroic tale

5. Of algae

6. Luminous intensity unit

7. Uncovers

8. French commune name

9. Poisonous gas

10. Pearl Jam’s bassist

11. Horse groom in India

13. Destroyed

17. A way to alter

24. Promotional materials

25. American state

26. Extinct flightless bird of New Zealand

27. “Modern Family” network

28. Last or greatest in an indefinitely large series

29. Exercise system __-bo

35. Type of bulb

36. Opposite of beginning

37. Utilize

38. Type of student

40. Deficiency of moisture

41. Areas of the eye

42. Select

43. Sheets of floating ice

44. Priests who act as mediums

45. Roof of the mouth

47. Unnatural

48. Illuminated

49. There are three famous ones

52. Large, fast Australian birds

53. “Dracula” heroine

54. Substitutes (abbr.)

55. Tax

62. IEEE

63. Yew

64. Sass

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 13

Undocumented worker fund seeks donations

The Pioneer Valley Workers Center this week launched the Undocu-Worker Solidarity Fund 413 to assist undocumented workers in Western Massachusetts who have lost their jobs due to the Covid-19 pandemic but are excluded from unemployment insurance and other federally funded safety net programs.

“Undocumented immigrant parents are terrified right now about how they will sustain their children and pay their rent without any income,” said Jose Martinez, vice president of the PVWC Board of Directors. “This fund is deeply needed by our members and by all undocumented workers in Western Massachusetts to survive this pandemic.”

The Undocu-Worker Solidarity Fund 413 has an initial goal of raising

\$50,000 from the community to distribute in small grants to undocumented workers in several industries in Western Massachusetts, including restaurants, farming and construction.

“We are glad this fund is being established and hope that the community will support it,” said Laurie Millman, executive director of the Center for New Americans. “There is a need for community support of all the immigrants who help to power our economy but do not benefit from the public support that is being offered.”

Some community members have created a pledge form to promise the donation of their federal stimulus check to the fund. Others are setting up social fundraisers to raise money from friends and family.

For more information on contribut-

ing to the fund, visit pvworkerscenter.org/undocu-fund.

“The Covid-19 pandemic is shedding light on what our movement has always known: the most essential workers who keep our society running are treated as the most disposable,” said Andrea Schmid, co-director and lead organizer at PVWC. “Undocumented workers are currently facing an impossible situation — when laid off, they do not have access to unemployment or government benefits. If they continue to work, they are exposed to the virus but have minimal to no access to testing, treatment, or health care. This fund is a concrete way to support our members, and all undocumented workers across the valley.”

The fund will begin accepting applications for aid after an initial period of

fundraising to meet the need. All immigrant workers in Western Massachusetts are welcome to apply. PVWC hopes to assist all who apply. To administer the fund, PVWC will direct 10 percent of the money raised to staffing costs.

“Unemployed immigrants are so desperate to support their families, many are being hired now to join Covid deep-cleaning crews, scrubbing surfaces in businesses and grocery stores that likely contain the virus,” Martinez said. “These jobs face grave danger and insufficient protection. Together we need to organize and also support one another.”

PVWC also supports other funds supporting workers and immigrants in Massachusetts, such as the MassUndocuFund, One Fair Wage Fund, and the Cosecha Undocumented Worker Fund.

NEWS & FEATURES

As a paper of record, we attempt to cover all general news, personality profiles, and community features that we know about. This includes all selectmen and school committee meetings as well as spot planning board, board of health, finance, and other town meetings determined by the issue's relevance to our readers. There are the annual major community event features that we should always cover, but we are more than open to suggestions of other features to celebrate the fabric of our communities and their many interesting occupants. Our loyal advertisers provide funding for this paid staff coverage.

For more information on news or community features for The Sun, please email thesun@turley.com.

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Veterans can apply for tax work-off

Applications are being taken this month for Holyoke's Veteran Tax Work-Off Program.

In exchange for working at government offices over the course of a year, veterans can receive an abatement of their next year's property taxes of up to \$1,500 per year.

The deadline to apply is Friday, April 24. An application can be found at www.holyoke.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/TaxReduction2021-1.pdf. Hours must be worked between July 1 and Nov. 30 of this year.

The program is open to any veteran, as defined by chapter 4, section 7, clause 43 of state law, who owns property in and pays real estate taxes to the city of Holyoke. The program participant's name must appear on the property deed.

The tax abatement will be earned on a per-hour basis, at \$12.75 per hour. Working 117 hours will earn the maximum abatement of \$1,500; no additional credit will be given for hours worked beyond 117. Those who work fewer than 117 hours will earn a pro-rated abatement.

Individuals will be chosen for jobs at city departments based on what best

matches their qualifications and skills. Applicants will be interviewed by the department supervisor of the position for which they have been placed. Program participants may not work for relatives who are city employees.

There will be a two-week probationary period to assess the appropriateness of the placement. A participant may be assigned to more than one department, if necessary to accumulate enough hours to qualify for the full abatement.

Time sheets will be filled out by the department supervisor on a weekly or monthly basis and submitted to the city's veterans services director. A final accounting of time worked will be submitted to the city assessor. The abatement will then be applied to the following fiscal year's property tax bills.

Eligible senior citizens who are also veterans can elect to participate in either the veterans' or senior citizens' tax work-off plan.

No applicant is guaranteed a position. A lottery system may be used if there are more applicants than available positions. Preference will be given to first-time applicants. Individuals previously chosen for the program may re-apply in subsequent years.

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Mazza finishes off amazing career for Tigers hockey



Photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Mike Mazza was a key member of the South Hadley (formerly South Hadley-Holyoke co-op) hockey team for the past few years. He recently finished a great career with more than 100 points.



By Tim Peterson
sports@turley.com

Mike Mazza was the lone freshman on the 2016-17 South Hadley varsity hockey team, which captured the Western Massachusetts Division 3A championship title with a 3-2 overtime victory against rival Chicopee.

Mazza helped the hockey team advanced into the 2017 finals by scoring a breakaway goal in a 4-2 semifinal victory against Amherst.

At the time, the team was a co-op with Holyoke High School, though that partnership

was ended after last season.

Mazza gave his thoughts about being the youngest player on the 2017 championship hockey team.

"We won the Western Mass. title when I was a freshman and it was a great experience for me," he said. "It was probably the best moment of my entire life."

Three years later, Mazza is the last remaining player from the 2017 championship team. He was also the only senior listed on this year's Tigers varsity hockey roster.

"It's a little bit different being the only senior on the

hockey team. You usually have a group of six or seven guys from one grade, who's been playing together each year," said Mazza, who was the Tigers captain this season. "I've only known some of the kids on this year's hockey team for a couple of years, but we've built a great bond." We're like one big family."

The Tigers entered the 2020 Western Mass. tournament as the fifth seed with an 11-7-2 record.

They began their postseason journey with a 5-2 quar-

See MAZZA, page 10

Latest school closure threatens cancellation of spring tournaments

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

The extended school closure imposed by Gov. Charlie Baker last week has now called into question whether or not school will resume in the 2019-2020 school year, but also whether or not there will even be a shortened regular season for spring sports in 2020.

Numerous schools have students chomping at the bit to get on fields and courts, but the latest closure extension threatens any of that from happening, as well as puts the postseason tournament in serious jeopardy.

MIAA officials and the Board of Directors were scheduled to have another meet-

ing to weigh guidance from the Tournament Management Committee about the prospect of having the tournament.

The current plan was to open up practices for spring sports on Monday, April 27. Games could begin on Monday, May 4.

Last week, Baker announced an extension of the school closure to Monday, May 4. However, depending on how the pandemic numbers shake out, social distancing orders could be lifted sooner. Players could hit fields before school resumes much like they do during the summertime preparing for fall sports.

While it remains a possibility, the MIAA has not discussed the possibility of the entire spring season being cancelled. However,

the board of directors did agree that if spring sports did not begin before April 27, there would be no tournament action.

On March 26, the MIAA described the additional school closure as a fluid situation. The MIAA hopes to provide an update sometime this week.

"Among TMC recommendations to the Board is that if there is a spring season start date of after April 27, there will not be an MIAA tournament," the MIAA website states. "This recommendation, as well as a plan to save a spring season for MIAA student-athletes will be the substance of a March 30 Board meeting."

See CLOSURE, page 10

City native to lead Blue Sox in 2020

Blue Sox President Fred Ciaglo announced today the hiring of Kate Avar and the team's new General Manager.

Avar, 22, will be returning to the Blue Sox organization after interning with the team during the 2016 season. The Easthampton resident, originally from Holyoke, is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts Amherst where she earned a B.S. degree in Sport Management



Kate Avar

from the Isenberg School of Management and a B.S. degree studying kinesiology from the School of Public Health and Health Sciences.

"We're very excited to appoint Kate as our new General Manager," said Ciaglo.

"Having previously served as one of our interns, she knows the culture and community-oriented mission of our organization. Given her education in sport manage-

See BLUE SOX, page 10

Summer Challenge announced for Thompson Speedway

THOMPSON, Conn. -- Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park and Save The Purse jointly announced on Thursday that competitors in the NASCAR Weekly Racing Series Late Model division will have three, 50-lap feature races in 2020 as part of a new Late Model Mid-Summer Challenge.

A group of competitors joined together over the offseason to form Save The Purse, a group that has come up with additional purse money through sponsors and have put it towards these special events. The group is run by recognized racing crew member Brad Martel.

Each of the three events will pay \$2,000 to the winner, \$1,000 for second and \$750 for third. A full purse will be distributed to the top 25 competitors. The races will take place as part of the three standalone NASCAR Weekly Racing Series events scheduled for June 3, July 8

and Aug. 5.

Thompson Speedway is committed to the future of oval track racing and in 2020 has planned a six-race NASCAR schedule. With the addition of a night of double features for all five NASCAR divisions, competitors will have the chance to run seven feature races.

These Late Model special events are going to be a must-watch for all race fans.

“Watching a group of racers come together and come up with funds to increase the purse is something special, and we are happy to work with them,” Terry Eames, the General Manager of Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park, said. “We’re looking forward to watching competitors race for this extra purse money while running some extra laps. Fans won’t want to miss these special events.”

“We were determined to come up

with the best possible solution to increase the purse value at Thompson in 2020,” Brad Martel, the Director of Save The Purse, said. “We’re looking forward to watching a competitive division competed in double their normal distance for some extra cash.”

Sponsors included in the Mid-Summer Classic will be announced later. As part of these special night events, the NASCAR Weekly Racing Series Sunoco Modifieds, SK Light Modifieds, Limited Sportsman and Mini Stocks will join the action.

Thompson Speedway also runs in the Late Model program under American Canadian Tour rules, and in 2020, will also be part of the New England Late Model Challenge Cup. Thompson is one of five tracks in the program – one that will have all scheduled weekly Late Model events eligible to receive points

towards winning the Cup. ACT will take the 10 best finishes for each registered driver across all five tracks and count it towards the drivers totals, with a special points system in place based on a driver’s feature finishes and event car counts, with bonus points for wins and cars passed. With the three events paying additional purse, these could be races that drivers across New England elect to attend to earn crucial points.

With COVID-19 sweeping through the United States, Thompson officials have been forced to update the 2020 schedule. Currently, the 46th annual Icebreaker presented by Liquid Death is tentatively scheduled for May 15-16. A full schedule of postponed events will be released later.

For more information on Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park, visit thompsonspeedway.com and follow the track on social media.

Valley Wheel Over-30 Baseball looking for new players

The Valley Wheel Over-30 Baseball League is seeking new players for the upcoming 2020 season, which is set to begin near the end of April. The league is seeking players ages 28 and up. Players turning 28 this year are eligible. However, only players 30 and older can pitch. The league plays 15 regular season games with games being held mostly on Sundays with a couple of weekday games thrown in the mix as well as a special Mother’s

Day Saturday game in early May. If interested in trying out, go to www.valleywheelbaseball.com. The rules of the league and new player forms can be found on the site.

For further information, you can contact the league’s commissioner, Jim Nason at wheel12@comcast.net or call him at (413) 433-4308. Tryouts will be taking place in the early weeks of April, weather permitting, with a draft following the tryouts.

Sign-ups ongoing for Quabbin Valley Baseball League

The Quabbin Valley Over-30 Baseball League is seeking new players for 2020 season. The league has six teams, several with open roster spots. Last year, the league voted to allow players age 28 and 29 to be able to join the league, though players under 30 are not eligible to pitch. The cost of the league this season is \$192. For players new to the league, there will be a workout held in early April prior to the league’s annual draft. Players will

have an opportunity to showcase their skills before being selected to a team for the season. The season is 15 regular season games plus at least one play-off game. Games are nine innings and metal (BBCOR -3) or wood bats are allowed. Fields locations are throughout Western Mass. For more information on the league, or if you are interested in registering, go to <https://www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org/>. The league is also in Facebook.

MAZZA, from page 9

terfinal victory against fourth-seeded Chicopee at the Olympia Ice Center in West Springfield on Feb. 25. The Tigers would lose in the semifinals to Greenfield.

“Chicopee has always been one of our biggest rivals,” Mazza said. “We always want to beat them in every game.”

Mazza finished that match with three assists, which included his 100th career point (goals and assists).

“It’s a very cool milestone, but my main objective is to win every game,” he said.

Unfortunately, Mazza’s outstand-

ing hockey career came to an end four days later when the Tigers suffered a 4-2 semifinal loss to the top-seeded Greenfield Green Wave.

“Mike has been a phenomenal hockey player for us during the past four years,” said South Hadley head coach Larry Camus. “He’s a very special kid.”

Mazza scored the tying goal at the beginning of the second period of the semifinal match, but the Green Wave scored a pair of late goals and they advanced to the Western Mass. finals for the first time since 2008.

Mazza didn’t have any of his classmates as his teammates on the hockey team as a sophomore or a junior either.

“All of my classmates decided to

play basketball or they did something else,” he said. “Since I was a little kid, playing hockey has always been my favorite thing to do. It’s very special being a member of this team.”

The Tigers didn’t qualify for the postseason when Mazza was a sophomore.

“We didn’t win very many games when I was a sophomore, but it was still a fun season,” Mazza said. “We lost a lot of players from the championship team and it was a rebuilding season for us.”

A year ago, South Hadley finished the regular season with a 13-5-2 record, but they lost to Easthampton in the quarterfinals.

Mazza was a member of the Tigers

top line this season, along with junior Matt Brunelle and sophomore Joe Meon.

“Matt is one of the best line mates that I’ve ever played with. He knows how to put the puck into the net,” Mazza said. “Joe is a first-year member of our hockey team, but the three of us became a very strong line.”

This past fall, Mazza was a member of the Tigers golf team, which is coached by David Blanchette. He’ll be wrapping up his high school athletic career this spring as an outfielder for the varsity baseball team, which is coached by Matt Foley.

Mazza is planning on going to college next year, but he hasn’t finalized those plans yet.

CLOSURE, from page 9

This recent news from the Governor is surreal. The MIAA will continue to monitor this fluid situation and provide updates regarding spring sports as soon as they are made available. Thank you all for your flexibility, understanding and patience. Support and guidance to our schools, student-athletes and to you, our membership, is priority during this uncertain time.

The spring season has been delayed in the past due to late winter snow that specifically shuts down baseball and softball games till the second or even third week of April. But there has never been a shutdown of action this lengthy.

However, last year, constant rain did wreak havoc on the regular season. In all

there was a week of delay to start the season, plus more than a dozen full-fledged rain days that postponed action throughout the spring and resulted in an additional week being added to the regular season.

If spring sports are able to commence on April 27, the regular season would be extended out until June 10, with playoffs to follow in the two weeks after that.

The spring season includes the most number of sports played in the least period of time, usually about eight weeks. Spring sports include: Baseball, softball, boys lacrosse, girls lacrosse, girls track, boys track, boys tennis, girls tennis, and boys volleyball.

Athletes have been shut down since March 10 during the state tournament week. Spring practices never happened.

BLUE SOX, from page 9

ment, Kate will bring strong business fundamentals, creativity and a passion for baseball to the Blue Sox front office.”

While at UMass Amherst, Avarad served as the Intramural Special Events Assistant and held multiple internships within the Athletic Department. After graduating from UMass Amherst, Avarad enrolled in graduate courses studying athletic training and emergency medicine at Boston University.

Avarad is eager to return to MacKenzie Stadium and expand her role with the organization.

“Growing up in Holyoke, I

attended many Holyoke Giants games, then later Blue Sox games, with my family which is where I fell in love with the sport of baseball,” said Avarad. I later interned with the team and saw firsthand the positive influence the team had on the local families and local community, similar to what I had personally experienced growing up,” she added.

“The Blue Sox reputation has grown tremendously over the past few years, making the team a staple throughout Western Mass, said Avarad. “Stepping into the role of General Manager, I hope I am able to build upon the relationship the organization has with the community and grow the team in the coming years.”

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HCC spring non-credit courses will meet online

In keeping with recommendations from public health officials and Gov. Charlie Baker’s stay-at-home advisory, Holyoke Community College has shifted its non-credit professional development and personal enrichment classes to online and remote forums for the foreseeable future.

Anyone with extra time who is interested in classes that are fun, educational or entertaining can now do so from the comfort and safety of their homes using a computer, tablet or smart phone.

As of Monday, March 30, HCC

began offering all of its credit-based certificate and degree programs remotely while restricting access to its main campus and satellite offices.

Students will have the opportunity to engage with live instructors and classmates by voice and video using online platforms like Zoom, WebEx and Google Hangouts.

“We’ve had to be very creative with some of our courses, like painting and dancing,” said Michele Cabral, HCC’s executive director of professional development and corporate learning. “For Acrylics, for example, the teacher will

share her screen during the lesson and have students share their own; Puerto Rican Bomba is similar to an online workout class.”

Classes are forming now for the remainder of the spring semester. Some current options include:

Arts: Introduction to Pastels; Watercolor Journaling (April 11-18)

Business and Career: Leadership Series including Personal Effectiveness, Critical Thinking, and Emotional Intelligence; Supervisory Series; Notary Public; Microsoft Excel 2016

Dance and Health: Puerto Rican

Bomba

Money Management: Extreme Couponing; SS Income Strategies; Earning Extra Money with a Mystery Shopping Business; Protecting Your Financial Nest Egg

Others: Memory, Dementia and Alzheimers; How to be a Smart Landlord; Elder Law and Estate Planning; Flying Drones: Prep for the FAA Exam.

To see a full schedule of courses or to register, visit hcc.edu/spring-online or email Valentyna Semyrog at vsemyrog@hcc.edu.

SOLDIERS, from page 1

determine how the virus was allowed to spread.

“To immediately stabilize the situation in Holyoke, new leadership has been installed and a clinical command group has been established to provide safe and appropriate care,” said a spokesperson for the state Executive Office of Health and Human Services. “A full investigation into what happened in Holyoke has been launched, starting [Wednesday], with the naming of Attorney Mark W. Pearlstein as the lead investigator into the matter.”

Under Liptak’s jurisdiction, the Soldiers’ Home is adhering to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. The primary focus is on making sure patients are safe, identifying individuals who need more acute care on-site or need to be transferred, restructuring the safety, medical, and infection protocols, and establishing clear isolation and quarantine zones to stop the spread of the disease.

Families have been able to reach out to the Soldiers’ Home through a dedicated family hotline and email. The hotline number is 413-552-4764, available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday. The email is CommunicationsMailbox-HLY@mass.gov.

The facility has been closed to visitors since March 14. Other precautionary measures include taking the temperature of all employees entering the building, hand sanitation stations for employees entering the building and throughout the facility, disinfecting and treating high-touch areas throughout the day, distributing personal protective equipment to



Flags flew at half-staff at the Holyoke Soldiers’ Home on Thursday, mourning the 15 residents who died over the weekend amid an outbreak of Covid-19.

Photo by Michael Ballway

employees when they enter the facility, taking residents’ daily temperatures, posting signs detailing proper hygiene and Covid-19 precautions, restricting the movement of residents in the long-term care and independent living facilities, and sending regular communications updates to veterans, families, and staff on guidance for infection control and prevention.

‘Lack of urgency’

Word first reached Morse’s office on Friday, March 27, that the Soldiers’ Home was dealing with several cases of coronavirus. On Saturday, Morse received an anonymous communication describing the gravity of the situation, but the city Board of Health was unable to make contact with Soldiers’ Home staff. On Sunday, Morse made direct contact with Walsh.

“There were things being posted on Facebook and social media over

the weekend. [As] we were not getting a response as the city, I reached out to Superintendent Walsh directly,” Morse said.

The phone call did not leave Morse feeling good about the situation.

“There was a clear lack of urgency on that phone call, where we were repeatedly told these were people with underlying health conditions,” Morse said. “That’s certainly not an excuse for improper isolation for those folks that did test positive. I know this is a concern at the Soldiers’ Home; it’s also a concern another nursing facilities and longer-term care facilities not just in Holyoke, but across the commonwealth.”

Morse reached out to the Gov. Charlie Baker after his conversation with Walsh and said within minutes, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito returned his call and arrangements were made with the secretary of health and human services, Marylou Sudders, to send a response

team first thing Monday morning. As part of the response, nurses, medical experts, and the National Guard have been brought in to assist.

Baker took to Twitter on Monday to offer his thoughts.

“As someone who has visited the Holyoke Soldiers’ Home on many occasions to catch up with staff and residents, I am heartbroken by today’s news,” Baker posted. “The loss of these residents to Covid-19 is a shuddering loss for us all.”

Congressman Richard Neal also released a statement saying he was “heartbroken” when he heard the news.

“The residents of the Soldiers Home have served their country with honor and distinction, and their health and safety, along with that of the staff, has always been top priority,” Neal said in his statement. “This is even more personal to me because I have an uncle who is a full-time resident there. I was shocked to learn of these deaths, some due to the coronavirus, last [Monday].”

Morse pledged to remain transparent and provide daily updates on the coronavirus situation in the city, including the number of cases and deaths as the situation continues to develop. He also reminds residents to be safe and practice social distancing following the painful, sad reminder of how deadly coronavirus can be.

“People have concerns about nursing homes and hospitals all across our city, all across our region,” he said. “We’re concerned about everyone everywhere. Please abide by social distancing and please stay home if you can.”

Flags in the city are flying at half-staff to honor the Soldiers’ Home residents who died.

CHURCHES, from page 1

while we’re disconnected.” Gustafson said. “I want to focus on the ‘cans’ rather than the ‘cannots.’”

Sunday school classes for youth at St. Peter’s have also moved to the Zoom platform, Gustafson said.

Gustafson said he plans to continue the online services until the state of emergency is over, but he has more innovative plans in mind for Holy Week.

For Palm Sunday, Gustafson wants to get a low-watt FM radio transmitter so that worshipers can drive to the church and park in the lot before tuning in to the audio broadcast. This will allow the congregation to be together in one place, but still maintain social distancing. If the service works, Gustafson hopes to repeat it on Easter.

Palm Sunday’s “drive-in” service is at 9:30 a.m. on April 5 at 34 Jarvis Ave., Holyoke. The service will also be recorded and available after the fact at www.stpetersholyokeye.org.

Members of other Holyoke churches should check their congregation’s website, and search for their church on Facebook.com, to see what services their community is offering online.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, one of Holyoke’s Roman Catholic parishes, is

another one of the congregations that has moved its services online.

Pastor Yerik Mendez said he has shared the last two weeks’ Masses on Facebook Live, and will continue to do. Like Gustafson, he wants to do something special for the upcoming holidays.

“As we get closer and closer to Holy Week and Easter, we’re trying to find ways to contact and connect with people,” Mendez said. He said he has gotten a lot of requests to find a way to continue one Palm Sunday tradition that can’t be done online.

“I’ve had people volunteer to wear gloves, masks, and to stay covered and keep disinfectant on them in order to pass out blessed palm branches,” he said.

Being a pastor is about more than leading worship on Sunday, Mendez noted. He is available by telephone throughout the week and has been able to take confessions that way. He’s also considering setting up a “drive-through confessional” in the church parking lot, which would allow parishioners to stay in their cars while speaking to their priest.

Although they’re trying to keep spirits up, pastors miss their congregations just as much as the people miss being able to participate in the traditions and personal connections of their religion.

“It’s lonely knowing people aren’t here [at church] but they want to be, I can’t thank them enough,” Mendez said. “They’re beautiful people and I don’t want them to suffer, I want to keep them safe, but it also breaks my heart.”

A similar feeling was expressed by Pastor Marisa Egerstrom at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, who spoke about the difference between seeing people in person rather than talking over the phone. There is a different vibe and you can learn more about a person and their situation in person, she said.

“Not being able to see my people has been crazy-making,” Egerstrom said. “Being able to talk to folks over the phone or over Zoom is nice, but it’s not the same. It feels good to talk to them, but it feels weird, too. It kind of feels like I’m blind. I didn’t realize how much of my job includes building relationships with people.”

She said videos of her church’s Sunday worship get uploaded to YouTube and linked from the church’s Facebook page, and she’s trying to keep in touch with as many families as she can.

St. Paul’s is not planning on any special outreach for Easter — yet. Egerstrom said her congregation includes some people who are on their smartphones constantly, but also some

people who barely have access to technology. Whenever the state of emergency is lifted, the congregation will gather on the next Sunday and have an Easter service in person on that date.

Pastor Chad Correia said Mountain View Baptist Church has had to shut down more than its Sunday worship. Because of coronavirus concerns, the church has had to suspend its bus ministry, which provided transportation to people who needed rides. Mountain View has been able to continue its food ministry, a pantry stocked with donated items and available for families that need help putting food on the table.

On Sundays, Mountain View is streaming its services live online. Correia said he’s trying to find a way to include a singer in the services without running afoul of state guidelines.

“We will do as we’ve been doing, we’ll have online services and try to stay connected through the phone or by email,” Correia said. “We have elder members, so we want them to stay safe. It’s hard not being around our people and not being able to see those in the hospital, but we’re taking it day by day.”

Sunday School will be closed until the church can meet again in person. Correia said he is staying connected by phone and online, trying to support people as best he can during these times.

horoscopes

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to customers.

Y L A L O

Answer: Loyal

Guess Who?

I am an actor born in Germany on April 2, 1977. My parents relocated to the Republic of Ireland when I was two to open a restaurant. I eventually found my way into acting, and audiences were first introduced to me in "Band of Brothers." I've made many other popular movies since then.

Answer: Michael Fassbender

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20
Things are not always what they seem, Aries. Keep this in mind when dealing or working with people you have never met. It may take some time to figure things out.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
Taurus, asking a bunch of questions may not unveil the answers you were hoping for. You may not be asking the right questions. Keep forging ahead.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21
The ability to listen is an important skill, Gemini. This ability is especially valuable when others come to you for advice. Listen intently and do your best to help.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22
Cancer, even if things do not entirely make sense this week, you can glean certain bits of information here and there that can help you to paint the bigger picture.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23
Leo, imitation is the highest form of flattery. Keep a keen eye on someone you admire at work, and then try to mirror this person in your actions.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22
Virgo, certain responsibilities may seem like a drain on your time. But right now you are not seeing how even small tasks can add up to big results in the end. Remain patient.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23
Libra, certain battles cannot be won no matter how hard you try. Do not focus unnecessary energy on things that cannot be scaled. Direct your focus to more important projects.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22
A project you started may come to a screeching halt, Scorpio. This does not mean you should abandon it entirely. It just means you will have to take a brief hiatus and restart.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21
Sagittarius, people naturally want to be around you, but sometimes you need to take a step back and focus on yourself. Clear your schedule for some personal time this week.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20
Spring is a time of new beginnings, Capricorn. You may be presented with several new opportunities. Travel, a new job or even expanding your family may be in the cards.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18
Aquarius, even if you do not have all the answers, you can take steps that address many of the changes that have occurred in your life lately.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20
Channel your creativity into projects that let you express yourself, Pisces. Artwork, writing and crafting are a few examples.

Websites for Kids		
SITE	WEBSITE ADDRESS	AUDIO
Storytime Online	www.storylineonline.net	Yes
Read to Me	readtomelv.com	Yes
We Give Books	wegivebooks.org	No
Starfall	starfall.com	Yes
Barnes & Noble	barnesandnoble.com/u/online	
Storytime	-storytime-books-toys/379003588/	Yes
TumbleBooks	tumblebooks.com/tcpclibrary.org/ tumblebooks.htm	Yes
International Childrens		
Digital Library	en.childrenslibrary.org/	No
ABCya!	abcya.com	Yes
Stornynory	www.stornynory.com	Yes
National Geographic	ngexplorer.cengage.com/	
Young Explorers	ngyoungexplorer/index.html	Yes
Oxford Owl	www.oxfordowl.co.uk	Yes

ANSWERS WILL BE IN NEXT WEEKS PAPERS

12 • APRIL 3 2020 • The Holyoke Sun

Restaurants partner to feed nonprofit

With societal crisis comes the opportunity for mutual aid. As the coronavirus pandemic grips the nation, community members and local businesses have sought opportunities to support each other during this time of need. One such partnership blossomed between the Western Massachusetts Training Consortium and local small businesses including Silk Deli & Bistro, Fernandez Family Restaurant and the Delaney House in Holyoke, and Simos Produce in Springfield.

The consortium provides key community-based support to a number of programs and communities throughout Western Massachusetts and beyond. One program, Home & Community Connections, supports eleven 24-hour homes for people with developmental or intellectual disabilities throughout Hampden County. When Covid-19 struck Western Massachusetts, staff

members began working seven-day shifts to minimize exposure both to themselves and to the people they support. Meanwhile, local food producers and restaurants were struggling to keep their doors open as businesses were shut down across the state.

Seeing an opportunity to build and support community, the consortium connected with Silk Deli & Bistro and Simos Produce to deliver prepared meals and boxes of produce to each of the 11 homes. More meals from Fernandez Family Restaurant, a family-run Puerto Rican restaurant, were delivered Tuesday, March 31, and there is already a plan to distribute ready-to-eat meals from the Delaney House on April 7.

Kristel Applebee, the executive director of the Consortium, expressed her appreciation to both local businesses and consortium employees supporting

people during the Covid-19 pandemic.

“The consortium has a 45-year history of creating conditions for community, so it only made sense, during this difficult time, to honor community by partnering with local food suppliers who are losing business. ... For our team members to have a hot meal or delicious produce hand delivered to them with encouraging words, by me and others, sends a message to them that we value their significant contributions at this most pressing time.”

Silk Deli & Bistro, on Northampton Street, shared via Facebook how critical it was to partner with the consortium, as it meant being able to continue supporting other customers in the community. It also meant that “today we can keep our doors open and keep our business running to please our customers,” the restaurant shared.

The Western Massachusetts



Local eateries are preparing meals for staff members of the Western Massachusetts Training Consortium. Each comes with a label: “May this food nourish your spirit and be a reminder of how much we appreciate you.”

Submitted photo

Training Consortium, founded in 1975, is a learning organization, committed to creating conditions in which people with lived experience pursue their dreams and strengthen our communities through full participation. To learn more, visit wmtcinfo.org.

Holyoke Arrests

The Holyoke Police Department recorded the following arrests March 21-29. No arrests in the public log have been omitted. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty. There were no arrests in the public log for March 22, 23, 24 or 29.

Saturday, March 21

Johnnattan M. Perez, 37, of 294 Elm St., Apt. 4B, Holyoke, was arrested at 2:52 a.m. on Sargeant Street on a warrant.

Edwin Solivan-Ortiz, 28, of 73 Rollins St., Springfield, was arrested at 11:57 p.m. on Walnut Street and charged with trespassing, breaking and entering for a misdemeanor, and wanton destruction of property under \$1,200.

Wednesday, March 25

Mari Berberena, 26, of 289 Walnut St., Apt. 2RA, Holyoke, was arrested at 2:12 a.m. on Elm Street and charged with trespassing and assault and battery on an elderly or disabled person.

Francisco E. Bermudez, 30, of 50 West St., Apt. 4L, Holyoke, was arrested at 2:12 a.m. on Elm Street on a warrant, and also charged with armed robbery with a firearm, breaking and entering for a misdemeanor, carrying a firearm without a license and possession of ammunition without a license.

Thursday, March 26

Dale Posusky, 48, of 1203 Northampton St., Holyoke, was arrested at 11:46 p.m. on Northampton Street on a warrant.

Omar Feliciano, 31, of 85 Chestnut St., Apt. 302, Holyoke, was arrested at 11:47 p.m. on Dwight Street and charged with indecent assault and battery on a child under 14.

Friday, March 27

Miguel Angel Santiago, 50, of 5 Cottage Ave., Apt. 1, Holyoke, was arrested at 10:02 a.m. at the police station and charged with failing to register as a level 2 or 3 sex offender.

Saturday, March 28

Dante Goncalves, 20, of no known address, was arrested on at 2:35 a.m. on High Street and charged with possession of a firearm without a license, and possession of ammunition without a license.

Vicente Torres, 21, homeless, was arrested at 3:23 a.m. on Clemente Street and charged with riding a snow or recreational vehicle on a public way, riding a snow or recreational vehicle under the influence of liquor, reckless or negligent operation of a snow or recreational vehicle, riding a snow or recreational vehicle without a helmet, riding an unregistered snow or recreational vehicle, speeding at a rate of speed greater than was reasonable and proper, assault and battery on a police officer, and resisting arrest.

Public Notices

SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLES Under G.L. c. 159B Sec 6B as Amended By Senate 466 of 1989
Notice is hereby given by **Reardon's Garage Inc., 1537 Northampton St., Holyoke, MA**, pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, p39 that on **April 8, 2020 at 12:00 noon** at 1537 Northampton St., Holyoke, MA, the following motor vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garagekeepers lien.

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Vin# 5NPDH4AE6GH746123
LKO: Michael Javier Rodriguez Cabreco
3 Lamb St.
So. Hadley, MA 01075

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Vin# JTKDE177270155454
LKO: Kimberly Cahoon
173 Holbrook Ave.
Willamantic, CT

2007 Lincoln MKZ
Vin# 3LNHM28T67R615580
LKO: Lamar Anthony
24565 Edgewood St.
Philadelphia, PA

2002 Toyota Celica
Vin# JTDDR32T320124721
LKN: Heriberto Carmona
3 Pray Dr.
Greenfield, MA

1998 Toyota Camry
Vin# 4T1BF22K6WU925414
LKO: Kayla Plasse
84 Grape St. #1L
Chicopee, MA

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Vin# 1FAFP24195G154148
LKO: Carlin Liquore
69 Blanchard Ave.
Ludlow, MA

2005 Chevy Malibu
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837 State St. #509
Springfield, MA

2001 Toyota Corolla
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LKO: Shauna Sabin
178 No. Summer St.
No. Adams, MA
3/20, 3/27, 4/03/2020

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All public notices to be published in the Holyoke Sun should be sent directly to notices@turley.com. Jamie Joslyn processes all public notices for this newspaper and can answer all of your questions regarding these notices. Please indicate the newspapers and publication date(s) for the notice(s) in the subject line of your email. For questions regarding coverage area, procedures or cost, please call Jamie directly at 413-283-8393.

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The Sun
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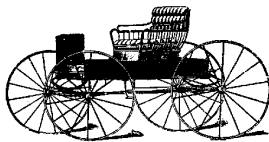
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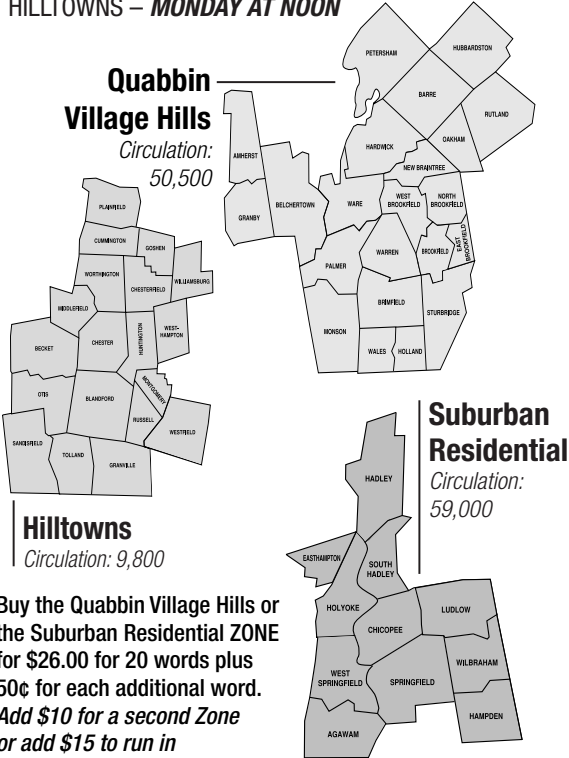
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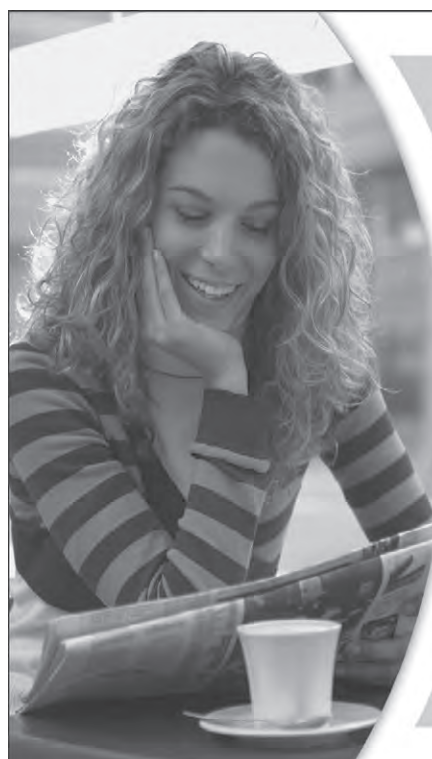
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HCC receives \$240K for vet techs

Holyoke Community College has received a \$240,743 state grant to expand and improve the outdoor instructional kennel used for its veterinary technician program.

The allocation was part of the Skills Capital Grants awarded last month by Gov. Charlie Baker's Workforce Skills Cabinet. The competitive grants are awarded to educational institutions that demonstrate partnerships with local businesses, as well as align curriculum and credentials with industry demand to maximize hiring opportunities in each region of the state.

"Skills Capital Grants help preserve the commonwealth's talent pipeline by funding expanded enrollment and equipment upgrades at educational institutions to provide more students with in-demand skills sought by employers," Baker said in announcing the awards.

HCC plans to use the money to increase the size of its kennel to better facilitate instruction and add modern updates, including a new security system, more lighting, and an overhang to protect the dogs housed there.

The college will also be adding a one-year veterinary assistant certificate program for the fall 2020 semester. It already offers a two-year associate degree vet tech program, the only one in Western Massachusetts accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association.

The governor's Workforce Skills Cabinet which was created in 2015 to bring together the secretariats of Education, Labor and Workforce Development, and Housing and Economic Development to align the state's education, economic development and workforce policies.



Vet tech instructor Jennifer York examines Bandit during a wellness check with help from Holyoke Community College student Briana Diaz of Westfield.

Submitted photo

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restricted and many employees have been assigned remote work when possible.

As of Wednesday, March 18, Baystate Health restricted its visitor policy and at this time is not allowing visitors at any Baystate Health hospitals.

There are exceptions, at the discretion of Baystate Health, of one parent or guardian for a patient under the age of 18, one birthing partner for a patient in labor, one person at a time for a hospice or end-of-life patient, one clergy member for an end-of-life patient and one caretaker for a completely depending patient.

Seeking treatment

Holyoke Medical Center advises people with symptoms to call their primary care provider or go to the hospital and follow signs labeled for fever, cough and flu symptoms, which lead to the Emergency Room.

Dr. Armando Paez, chief of infectious diseases at Baystate Health, added that "approximately 80 percent of Covid-19 are mild infections.

"However, this can be a serious infection requiring hospitalization for some, particularly in the elderly and those with diabetes, heart and lung disease," he said. "Similar to the flu, symptoms may include fever, cough, and shortness



Cooley Dickinson had issued 14 positive tests for Covid-19 and was in the process of investigating 92 additional people, as of March 25.

Photo by Dalton Zbierski

of breath two to 14 days after exposure. Symptoms can be mild to severe illness and result in pneumonia."

Medical professionals strongly recommend that everyone stay home, isolate, practice social distancing and maintain good hand hygiene.

"That's the best thing we can do to help decrease the transmission of the virus," said Rebecca MacGregor, director of marketing at Holyoke Medical Center.

Local hospitals are in daily communication with local and state officials, the Massachusetts Hospital Association and other hospitals. Cooley Dickinson is also in touch with its parent hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

"Conversations are about testing; supporting our workforce through this public health crisis; planning for a potential surge of patients as well as managing the daily operations of people who come to the hospital with heart attack, stroke, and other medical conditions that are not related to Covid-19. We are working collaboratively across the region and the commonwealth of Massachusetts," said MacGregor.

MacGregor explained what symptoms should prompt a hospital visit.

"If someone is experiencing common symptoms of Covid-19, such as fever or cough, they should call their primary health care provider for guidance," she said. "For their safety and the safety of

others, please do not go to an urgent care clinic or emergency room unless you have been instructed to do so."

"Your primary care provider will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. If you are experiencing life-threatening symptoms such as difficulty in breathing or pressure in the chest, please call 9-1-1."

Supply shortage

Hospitals and medical centers across the state are being also facing a lack of supplies.

Materials that may have been taken for granted last month have quickly become precious commodities. Local facilities are preparing for the worst, and additional materials are needed.

Holyoke Medical Center had adequate supplies as of March 23, but MacGregor voiced concerns surrounding resupply. The hospital needs N-95 masks and other supplies, she said. Used or homemade masks will not be accepted.

Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Northampton adopted a similar policy regarding "risky masks," but urges residents to donate any medical-grade personal protective equipment they can spare.

Acceptable donations include surgical or fluid shield N-95 masks, goggles, safety glasses, disposable gowns, hand sanitizer, bleach and sanitizing wipes.

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